MARVEL
X-MEN 2099
1993 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.25 US
$1.60 CAN
2
NOV
UK 95p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DIRECT EDITION
00211

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
SYNGE CITY BLUES
BENEATH THE ABANDONED NUEVO SOL ARCOLOGY.
PUT THAT RUSTBUCKET IN GEAR AND GO, METALHEAD!
WE'VE GOT TO LOSE THOSE SYNGE ENFORCERS BEFORE ANY OF THEIR PLASMA BURSTS CONNECT!
KCHOW
KCHOW
ONE OF THEIR HIRED GUNS ALREADY SHOT XI'AN.
AND IF HE DIES--
EXPERIENCE
KCHOW
--EVERYTHING FALLS APART!

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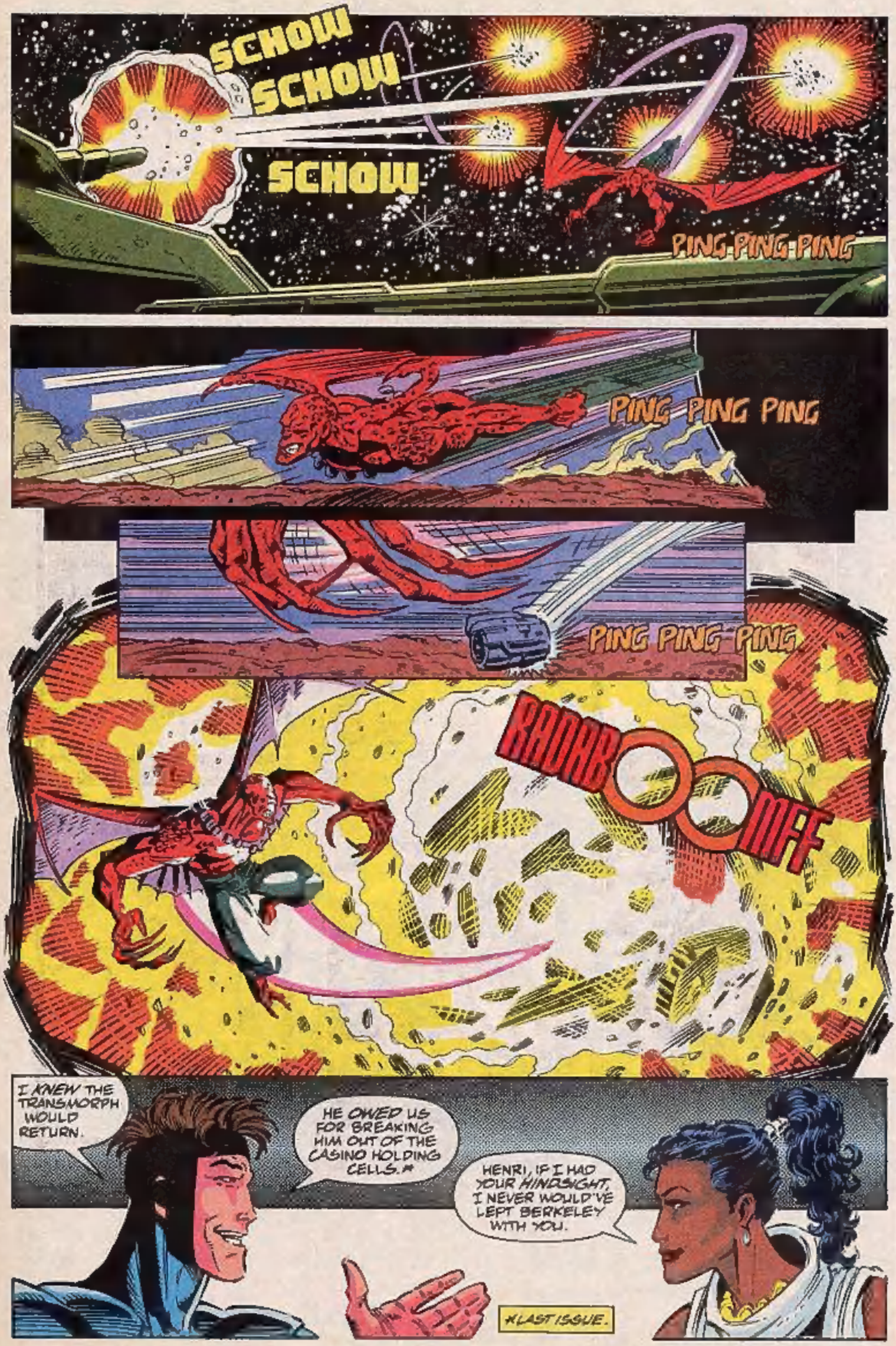
X-MEN 2099™ Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1993. Published by MARVEL COMICS, Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. **Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.** Published monthly. Copyright © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.25 per copy in the U.S. and $1.60 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: $15.00 U.S., $27.00 foreign; and Canadian subscribers must add $8.00 for postage and GST. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. X-MEN 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO X-MEN 2099, c/o MARVEL COMICS, 9TH FLOOR, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016.** Printed in Canada

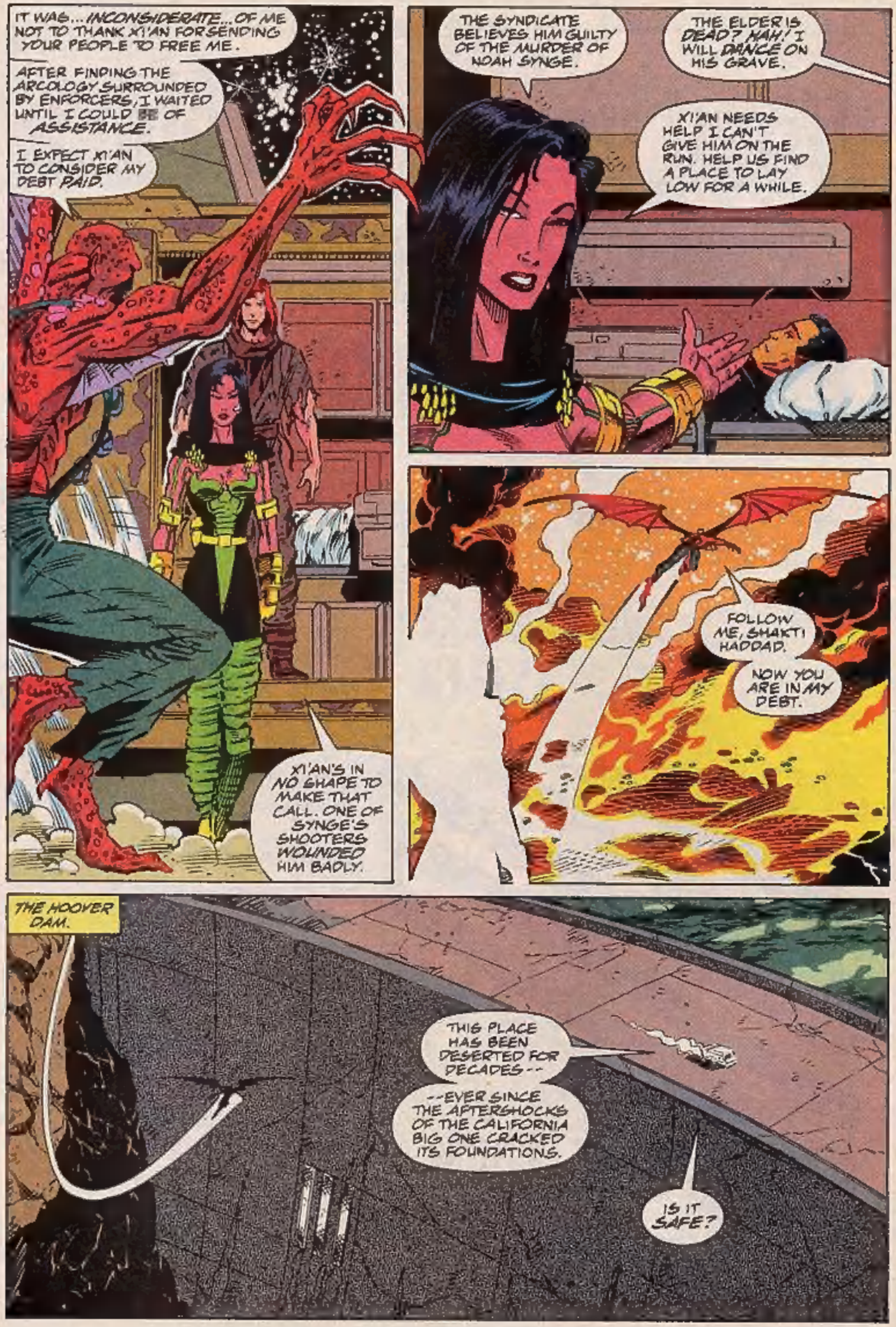
KCHOW
KCHOW
KCHOW
YOU THINK THEY'D JUST LEAVE US ALONE FOR ONCE.
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I, TINA, THE SYNDICATE SEES OUR INDEPENDENCE AS A THREAT.
THE ESTABLISHMENT ALWAYS RESPONDS TO THE EMPOWERED MINORITY WITH VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION.
KRASH
RIGHT NOW I JUST WISH I WAS EMPOWERED WITH YOUR STEEL SKIN, EDDIE!
OUR MOMENTARY DISCOMFORT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE PAIN XI'AN ENDURES FOR US ALL.
YOU SAVED HIM, TIM. IF YOU HADN'T STOPPED THAT SNIPER, XI'AN WOULD BE DEAD.
YEAH, I DON'T HAVE TO BE A DOCTOR TO KNOW XI'AN'S STILL IN CRITICAL CONDITION FROM THAT SHOT.
WHAT DOES NOAH SYNGE HAVE AGAINST XI'AN THAT HE WOULD HIRE AN ASSASSIN--
--AND THEN SEND HIS ENFORCERS TO CLEAN UP AFTER THE FACT?
I CAN ANSWER THAT.
ACCORDING TO THE ENFORCER COM-LINES, NOAH SYNGE IS DEAD--VICTIM OF SOME SORT OF MOLECULAR DISRUPTION.
THEY BLAME XI'AN FOR THE MURDER.
A FACILE ASSUMPTION, XI'AN CERTAINLY HAS BOTH MOTIVE AND MEANS.
HE HATED SYNGE--AND HIS TOUCH BREAKS DOWN THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF ANYTHING IT CONTACTS.
SHAKTI, YOU DON'T THINK HE ACTUALLY...
SYNGE...I HAVE THE POWER TO DESTROY YOU AND ALL THIS...

STEP BACK, TIM, HE'S STILL IN SHOCK.
THIS DIAGNOSTIC MONITOR SHOULD KEEP HIS VITAL SIGNS STABLE UNTIL WE CAN GET TO A REAL MEDCENTER.
HE NEEDS TIME TO HEAL IN A SAFE PLACE.
SHAKTI, THE ARCOLOGY WAS THE ONLY SAFE PLACE ANY OF US HAD--
--AND THAT'S IN RUBBLE NOW.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
DANGER : DO
AS TO OUR NEXT DESTINATION, MEANSTREAK'S OUR POINT MAN.
--HE'S SCOUTED FOR THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE.
HEY, KIDS...
...I'M BACK.
YOU'RE SMOKING.
HAPPENS WHEN I'M AROUND YOU, KRYS--
--AND WHEN I'M PUSHING MY OWN PERSONAL ENVELOPE OF SPEED AND DISTANCE. GIVE ME A SECOND TO COOL DOWN.
YOU'VE MAPPED AN ESCAPE ROUTE?
TUNNELS ARE CLEAR, BUT ONCE WE GET OUTSIDE... BAD NEWS.
WHEN YOU FOUND ME ON THE STREET, SHAKTI, AND INVITED ME TO XI'AN'S GATHERING--
--I HOPED MAYBE I'D SCAVENGE SOME FOOD, FIND A ROOF TO SLEEP UNDER--

--BUT I NEVER EXPECTED TO BE DODGING ENFORCER PLASMA-FIRE.
HATE TO TELL YOU, TIM. IT ONLY GETS HORSE.
LOOK UP AHEAD.
OUT OF THE FIRE AND INTO THE FRYING PAN.
WE'RE ROAD-KILL.
STAY YOUR COURSE, EDDIE. DON'T STOP UNTIL I GIVE THE WORD.
I'VE LANDED DEAD CENTER IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR.
THEY STARTED IT, TIM. WE'LL FINISH IT.
HEADS UP, GENESCRAPE, JOYRIDE'S OVER.
SURRENDER XI'AN OR WE SEND EVERYBODY TO THE AFTERLIFE.
MEANSTREAK, KRYSTALIN, PREPARE TO RUN INTERFERENCE ON MY MARK.
TIM, CAN YOU HANDLE A GUN?
AGAINST AN EARTH-SHAKER?
THAT THING CARRIES ENOUGH FIREPOWER TO LEVEL THE ENTIRE ARCOLOGY.
STOP YOUR VEHICLE NOW, MUTANTS.
OUR PRIORITY IS KEEPING XI'AN SAFE.

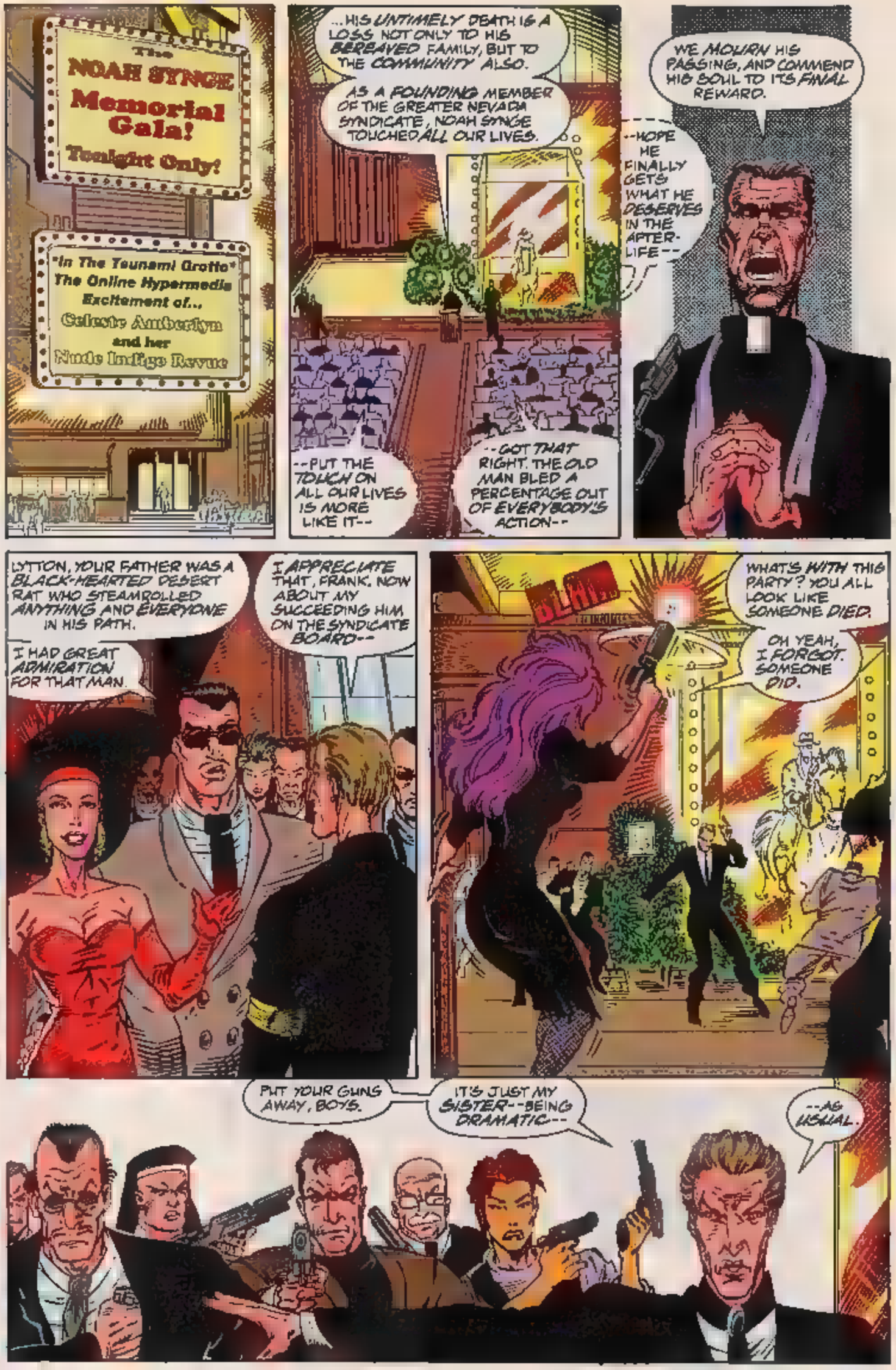
YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS TO GIVE US THE--
CAPTAIN! AT NINE O'CLOCK. WHAT THE--
BA KOOM
JUST WANT TO SEE WHO'S PROVIDING THE AIR SUPPORT.
FRITZ, YOU GOTTA SEE THIS --
TINA, GET DOWN!
IT'S BLOODHAWK!
'REMEMBER THOSE STORIES ABOUT THE UNDERGROUND TESTING CREATING MONSTERS IN THE DESERT?
"THERE'S YOUR PROOF.
"GOOD THING HE'S ON OUR SIDE, HUH?"
SYNGE, YOUR MEN HAVE DESPOILED THE DESERT FOR TOO LONG.
KLIK PING PING PII


SCHOW
SCHOW
SCHOW
PING PING PING
PING PING PING
PING PING PING
RAORB
OOMFF
I KNEW THE TRANSMORPH WOULD RETURN.
HE OWED US FOR BREAKING HIM OUT OF THE CASINO HOLDING CELLS.*
HENRI, IF I HAD YOUR HINDSIGHT, I NEVER WOULD'VE LEFT BERKELEY WITH YOU.
*LAST ISSUE.

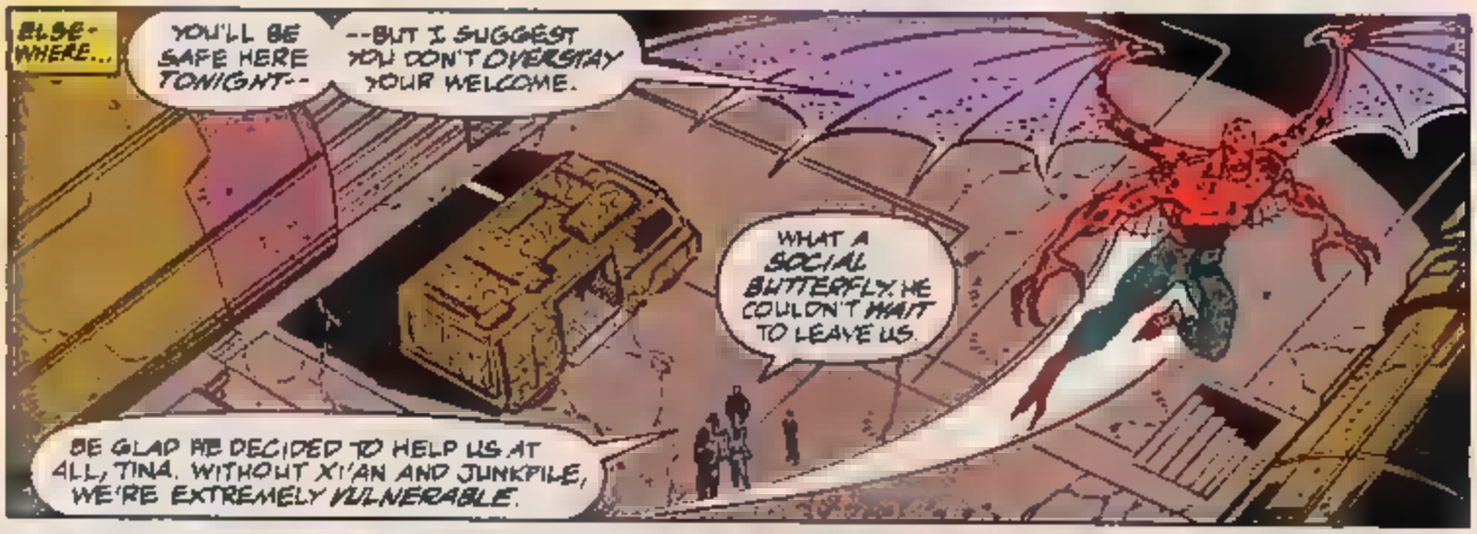

IT WAS... INCONSIDERATE... OF ME NOT TO THANK XI'AN FOR SENDING YOUR PEOPLE TO FREE ME.
AFTER FINDING THE ARCOLOGY SURROUNDED BY ENFORCERS, I WAITED UNTIL I COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE.
I EXPECT XI'AN TO CONSIDER MY DEBT PAID.
XI'AN'S IN NO SHAPE TO MAKE THAT CALL. ONE OF SYNGE'S SHOOTERS WOUNDED HIM BADLY.
THE SYNDICATE BELIEVES HIM GUILTY OF THE MURDER OF NOAH SYNGE.
THE ELDER IS DEAD? HAH! I WILL DANCE ON HIS GRAVE.
XI'AN NEEDS HELP I CAN'T GIVE HIM ON THE RUN. HELP US FIND A PLACE TO LAY LOW FOR A WHILE.
FOLLOW ME, SHAKTI HADDAD.
NOW YOU ARE IN MY DEBT.
THE HOOVER DAM.
THIS PLACE HAS BEEN DESERTED FOR DECADES--
--EVER SINCE THE AFTERSHOCKS OF THE CALIFORNIA BIG ONE CRACKED ITS FOUNDATIONS.
IS IT SAFE?

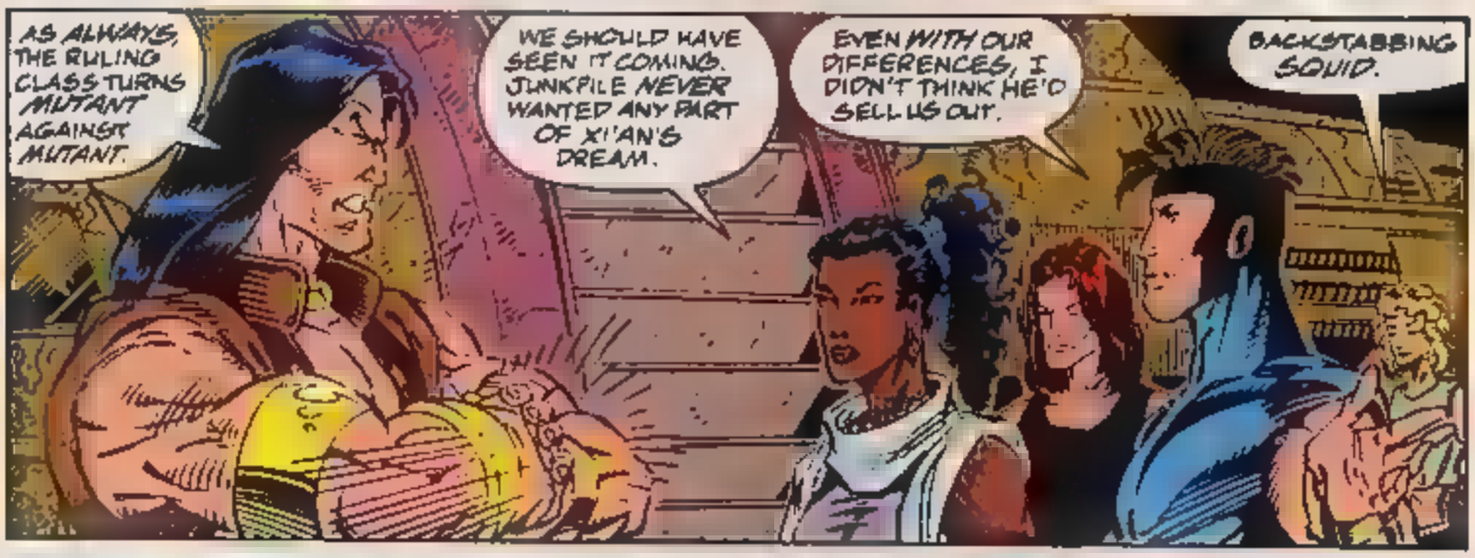
"SAFER THAN NUEVO SOL."
SEVEN DEAD. NINETEEN WOUNDED. FORTY-TWO IN CUSTODY. FRINGERS AND NOMADS. EXPENDABLES.
BUT YOU LET XI'AN AND HIS SO-CALLED MUTANT "ELITE" ESCAPE.
I PAY YOU TO BE BETTER THAN THAT, SALVATORE.
YES, SIR, MR. GYNGE.
LYTTON, YOUR ERRAND BOYS SCREWED THIS ONE UP ROYALLY.
ONCE XI'AN RECOVERS FROM YOUR BOTCHED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT--
--HE'LL DO TO YOU WHAT YOU CLAIM HE DID TO YOUR FATHER.
XI'AN AND MY FATHER'S ENMITY WAS WELL KNOWN.
AND WHO ELSE COULD'VE ENDED HIS LIFE IN SUCH A GROTESQUE FASHION?
SALVATORE, PLEASE BRING ME ANOTHER SHRIEK AMPULE. THIS IS MY LAST.
STILL PUMPING THAT RADWASTE INTO YOUR SYSTEM, LYTTON? A QUICK FIX OF COURAGE?
DON'T MOCK ME, JUNKPILE. YOU PLAYED JUDAS AT THIS LAST SUPPER.
YOU LET THE DRUG MAKE YOU STUPID.
TREAT ME LIKE ONE OF YOUR CASINO TOADIES AND I'LL TEAR YOU APART.
AND GET THIS STRAIGHT--
--YOUR MEAT SLEW THE HIT.

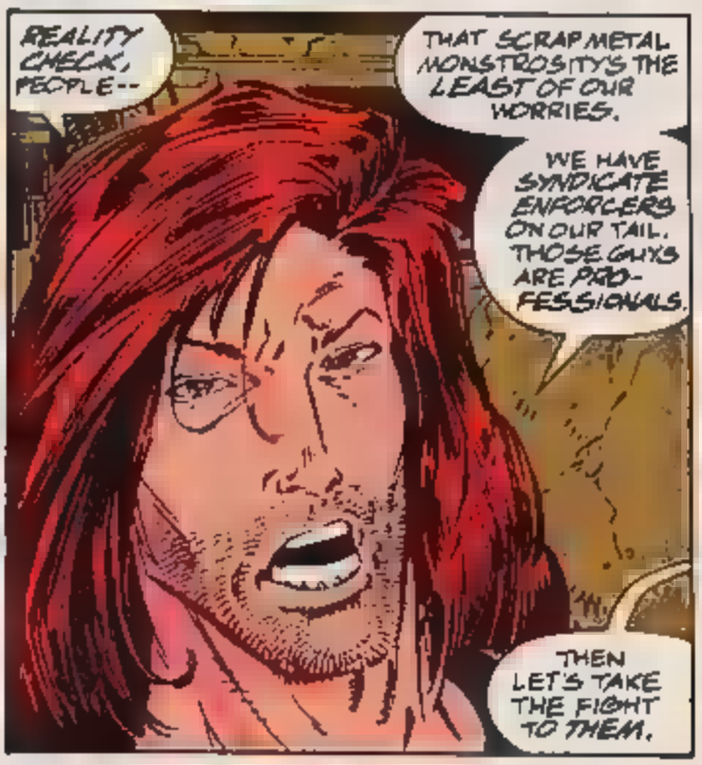
AVENGING MY FATHER'S DEATH SHOULD HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE OPERATION.
NOW MY BEST SHOOTER LIES MORTALLY WOUNDED BY ONE OF XI'AN'S MUTANT DISCIPLES.
SPARE ME THE PHONY OUTRAGE. OLD NOAH DIDN'T KICK OFF BECAUSE OF XI'AN.
AN ALLEGATION FROM A MUTANT OUTLAW LIKE YOURSELF WOULD CARRY LITTLE WEIGHT WITH THE SYNDICATE.
COOL OUT, LYTTON, I WON'T SPOIL YOUR LITTLE CHARADE.
WE BOTH WANT XI'AN OUT OF THE PICTURE.
THEN FIND HIM.
I WILL. AND IF YOU CROSS ME--
--I'LL DAMAGE YOU MORE THAN XI'AN AND ALL HIS SHEEP COMBINED EVER COULD.
HELP ME, SIR... THE PAIN...
OF COURSE.
THUNK

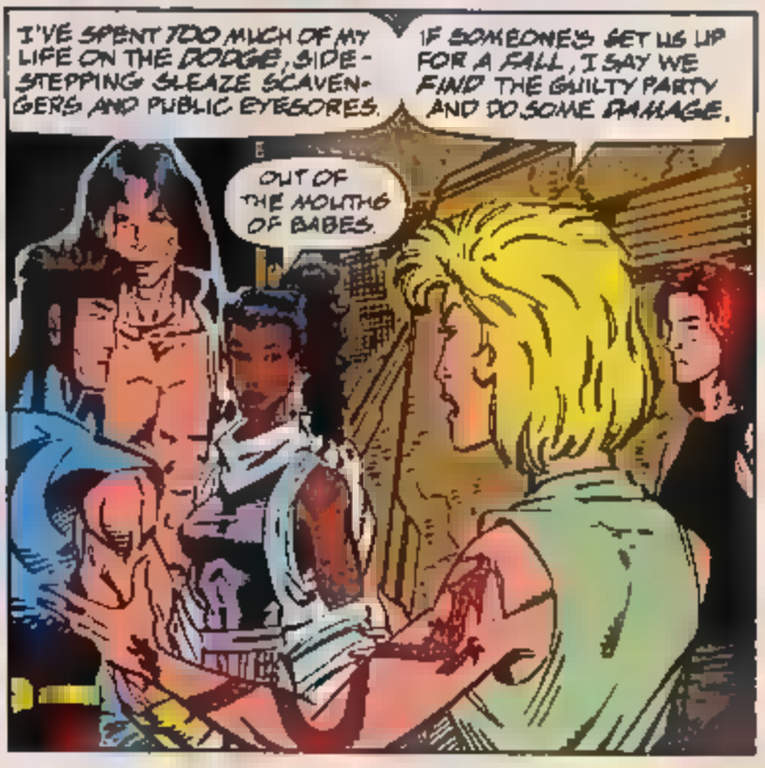

The NOAH SYNGE Memorial Gala!
Tonight Only!
"In The Tsunami Grotto"
The Online Hypermedia Excitement of...
Celeste Amberlyn
and her
Nude Indigo Revue
...HIS UNTIMELY DEATH IS A LOSS NOT ONLY TO HIS BEREAVED FAMILY, BUT TO THE COMMUNITY ALSO.
AS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE GREATER NEVADA SYNDICATE, NOAH SYNGE TOUCHED ALL OUR LIVES.
--PUT THE TOUCH ON ALL OUR LIVES IS MORE LIKE IT--
--GOT THAT RIGHT. THE OLD MAN BLED A PERCENTAGE OUT OF EVERYBODY'S ACTION--
WE MOURN HIS PASSING, AND COMMEND HIS SOUL TO ITS FINAL REWARD.
--HOPE HE FINALLY GETS WHAT HE DESERVES IN THE AFTER-LIFE--
LYTTON, YOUR FATHER WAS A BLACK-HEARTED DESERT RAT WHO STEAMROLLED ANYTHING AND EVERYONE IN HIS PATH.
I HAD GREAT ADMIRATION FOR THAT MAN.
I APPRECIATE THAT, FRANK. NOW ABOUT MY SUCCEEDING HIM ON THE SYNDICATE BOARD--
WHAT'S WITH THIS PARTY? YOU ALL LOOK LIKE SOMEONE DIED.
OH YEAH, I FORGOT. SOMEONE DID.
PUT YOUR GUNS AWAY, BOYS.
IT'S JUST MY SISTER--BEING DRAMATIC--
--AS USUAL.

QUITE A TURNOUT. EVERYONE'S HERE. THE SYNDICATE BOSSES. THE HIGH ROLLERS. THE HEADLINERS.
A SORRY COLLECTION OF HYPO-CRITES. PAYING THEIR RESPECTS TO A MAN THEY HATED.
HERE'S TO YOU, DADDY--AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON!
CLICK
DESDEMONA, YOU'RE EMBARRASSING ME.
CRYING CROCODILE TEARS FOR THE CROWD, LYTTON? YOU DESPISED THE BUZZARD AS MUCH AS I DID.
GIVE ME THE GUN, BEFORE YOU--
BLAM!!
FACE IT, BROTHER, DADDY'S DEAD AND YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM DANCING ON HIS GRAVE.

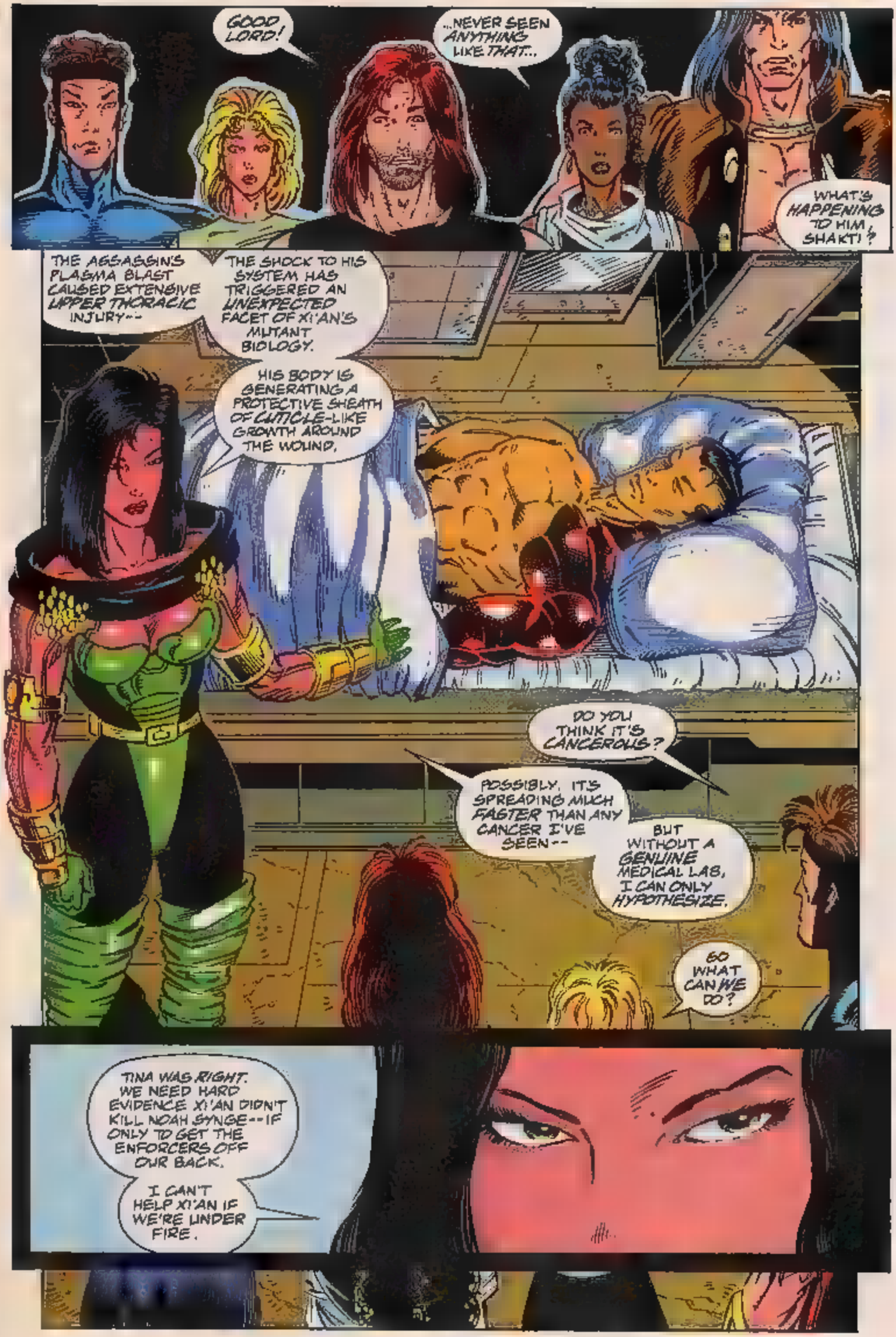

ELSE-WHERE...
YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE TONIGHT--
--BUT I SUGGEST YOU DON'T OVERSTAY YOUR WELCOME.
WHAT A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY. HE COULDN'T WAIT TO LEAVE US.
BE GLAD HE DECIDED TO HELP US AT ALL, TINA. WITHOUT XI'AN AND JUNKPILE, WE'RE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE.


AS ALWAYS, THE RULING CLASS TURNS MUTANT AGAINST MUTANT.
WE SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING. JUNKPILE NEVER WANTED ANY PART OF XI'AN'S DREAM.
EVEN WITH OUR DIFFERENCES, I DIDN'T THINK HE'D SELL US OUT.
BACKSTABBING SQUID.


REALITY CHECK, PEOPLE--
THAT SCRAP METAL MONSTROSITY'S THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES.
WE HAVE SYNDICATE ENFORCERS ON OUR TAIL. THOSE GUYS ARE PRO-FESSIONALS.
THEN LET'S TAKE THE FIGHT TO THEM.


I'VE SPENT TOO MUCH OF MY LIFE ON THE DODGE, SIDE-STEPPING SLEAZE SCAVEN-GERS AND PUBLIC EYESORES.
IF SOMEONE'S SET US UP FOR A FALL, I SAY WE FIND THE GUILTY PARTY AND DO SOME DAMAGE.
OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES.

EVERYONE. COME QUICKLY. IT'S XI'AN.

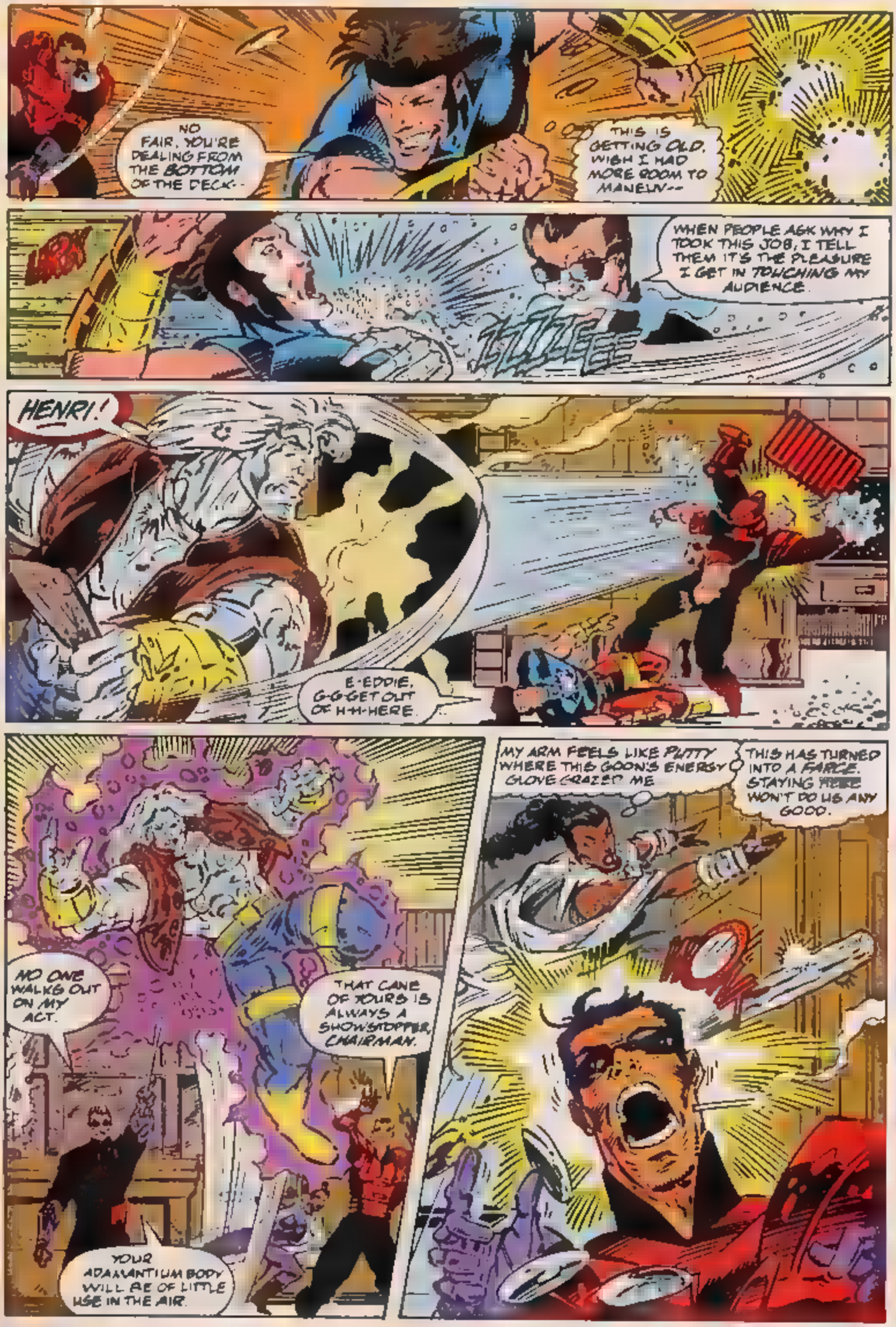

GOOD LORD!
...NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM, SHAKTI?
THE ASSASSIN'S PLASMA BLAST CAUSED EXTENSIVE UPPER THORACIC INJURY--
THE SHOCK TO HIS SYSTEM HAS TRIGGERED AN UNEXPECTED FACET OF XI'AN'S MUTANT BIOLOGY.
HIS BODY IS GENERATING A PROTECTIVE SHEATH OF CUTICLE-LIKE GROWTH AROUND THE WOUND.
DO YOU THINK IT'S CANCEROUS?
POSSIBLY. IT'S SPREADING MUCH FASTER THAN ANY CANCER I'VE SEEN--
BUT WITHOUT A GENUINE MEDICAL LAB, I CAN ONLY HYPOTHESIZE.
SO WHAT CAN WE DO?
TINA WAS RIGHT. WE NEED HARD EVIDENCE XI'AN DIDN'T KILL NOAH SYNGE--IF ONLY TO GET THE ENFORCERS OFF OUR BACK.
I CAN'T HELP XI'AN IF WE'RE UNDER FIRE.

LATER.
Retinal Pattern Verified. Employee CLX-44411W: Cole, Wesley Alan
SYN MORT GE UARY
I LOVE THIS TOWN. EVERYTHING'S OPEN ALL NIGHT.
EDDIE, STUFF OUR KEY MASTER FRIEND INTO AN AIR DUCT AND FOLLOW US IN.
ARE YOU GOING TO GO QUIETLY, PROLE, OR DO I HAVE TO HURT YOU?
QUIETLY, SIR. QUIETLY.
LET'S HOPE THAT CRAZY DESDEMONA DOESN'T TAKE ANY MORE SHOTS AT HER FATHER.
I HAD ENOUGH TROUBLE MAKING THE OLD MAN LOOK PRESENTABLE THE FIRST TIME.
CASINO
HEY--
TWO DOWN.
CASINO DEPARTURES
YOU'RE NOT AUTHORIZED TO BE HERE! I'M CALLING--
WWOOOSH
--SECURITY.
KEEP YOUR JACKET ON, JOYBOY. I'M PUTTING YOU IN COLD STORAGE.
AT LEAST YOU'LL HAVE COMPANY.
SLAM!

HISTORY SHOWS US THAT MUTANTS HAVE OFTEN BEEN MADE THE SCAPEGOATS OF TYRANTS.
THAT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY THE CASINO BLAMES XI'AN FOR SYNGE'S MURDER.
THE ENMITY BETWEEN XI'AN AND NOAH SYNGE WAS LONG STANDING AND WELL KNOWN.
WHEN XI'AN RODE WITH THE LAWLESS, SYNGE TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM FOR HIS CASINO ELITE.
LIKE HE'D BE A PART OF THOSE LOSERS.
"XI'AN'S REFUSAL ANGERED THE OLD MAN, AND ENFORCER PRESSURE WAS ONE REASON XI'AN LEFT FOR VIETNAM.
"HE RETURNED FROM SAIGON WITH A NEWFOUND CONSCIENCE AND A VISION OF A POST-CORPORATE WORLD ORDER.
NOW HE HAD REAL REASON TO OPPOSE SYNGE AND THE SYNDICATE.
"KNOWING MY ABILITIES WOULD HELP HIM FIND OTHER MUTANTS, HE CONVINCED ME TO LEAVE STARK/FUJIKAWA.
"THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS DREAM AND THE NATURE OF HIS PASSION MADE HIM IMPOSSIBLE TO REFUSE.
"WHEN I FOUND YOU ON THE STREET, THE GATHERINGS HAD BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SIX MONTHS.
"XI'AN SAID YOU WOULD BE THE FINAL COMPONENT OF HIS STRIKE FORCE--
"--OF HIS X-MEN.
THAT PHRASE AGAIN. XI'AN USED IT BEFORE HE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS.
IT IS A SYMBOL OF POWER AND--
RUMBLE
THAT NOISE--
WE'VE BEEN FOUND OUT!
RRRUMBLE
RRUMBLE

I FEEL LIKE A GRAVE ROBBER [illegible]ING THIS.
SYNGE STOLE MORE FROM THE PEOPLE THAN A MERE TISSUE SAMPLE.
HE ROBBED THEM OF THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR MONEY, THEIR LIVES.
HE MADE SURE THE HOUSE ALWAYS TOOK ITS CUT.
OKAY. NO MORE COMPLAINING.
EXCEPT ABOUT BEING THIS CLOSE TO A HORSE FULL OF EMBALMING FLUID. EEEUUU.
HENRI, YOU READY?
AS READY AS I CAN BE WITH THE ARCHAIC HARDWARE EDDIE BROUGHT IN HIS PACK.
I HAVE A FRIEND AT ALCHEMAX WHO'S MUCH BETTER AT MOLECULAR ANALYSIS THAN I AM.
BUT [illegible] YOUR UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HUMBLE OPINION...
THIS TISSUE WAS DEAD BEFORE IT [illegible] SUBJECTED [illegible] AN ACCELERATED DECOMPOSITION PROCESS--
--THAT SIMULATES THE EFFECT OF XI'AN'S HAND. THERE'S OUR PROOF.
THAT'S OUR CUE, BOYS. RAISE THE CURTAIN AND BREAK A LEG.
HENRI, THE WALL'S OPENING.
SHOOOOOSH
GOOD EVENING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE SYNGE CASINO AND HOTEL.
TONIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE SYNDICATE'S ELITE ENFORCERS--
--THE [illegible]
IT'S SHOWTIME.

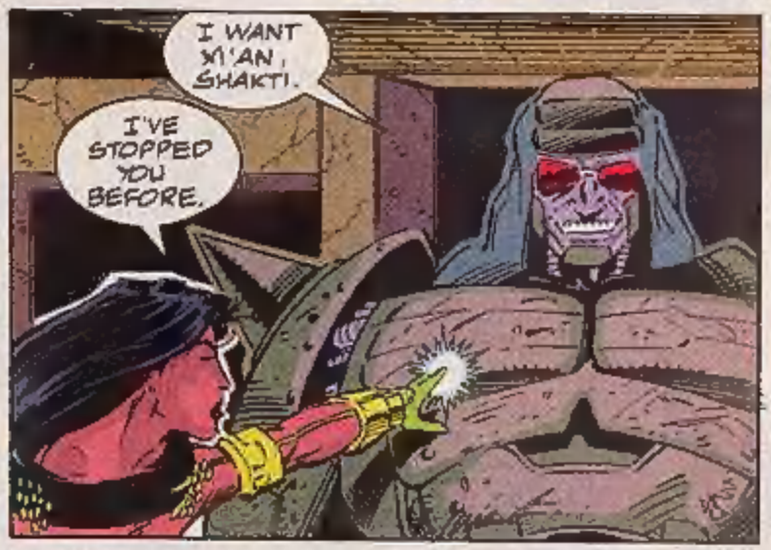
HEARD ABOUT THESE GUYS--SYNGE'S TECHNO-ENHANCED GOON SQUAD. THIS ONE MUST BE THE DEALER.
HE'S THROWING DIAMOND CUT RAZOR-DISKS AT ME--DEADLY IF THEY CONNECT!
TIME TO FOLD, MUTANT.
NICE GROUPING.
MORE GUNS. COMPENSATING FOR YOUR SIZE, LITTLE ONE?
YOUR WHOLE CRYSTAL VOODOO TRIP, BABY, IT'S BEAUTIFUL--AND I MEAN THAT--
BUT IT DOESN'T COMPARE TO THE ELECTRIFYING TOUCH OF MR. ENTERTAIN-MENT.
AHHH
THINK I HAVEN'T BEEN HECKLED BEFORE, KONG?
DON'T LIKE THE PLASMA BURST, WE'LL TRY SONICS. I GOT A MILLION WAYS TO WEAR YOU DOWN.
SEE, IN THIS TOWN, THE SUICIDE KING KILLS LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS.
ARM'S NUMB. I WANTED TO AVOID A PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION.

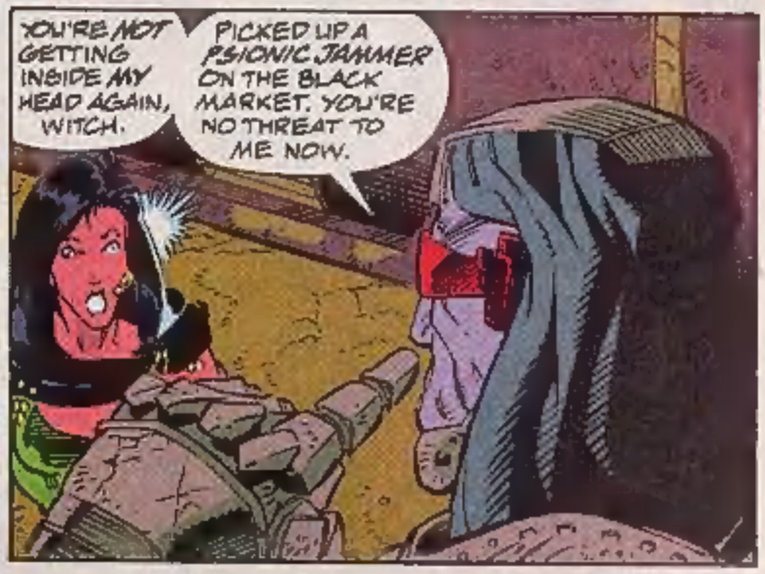

NO FAIR, YOU'RE DEALING FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE DECK--
THIS IS GETTING OLD. WISH I HAD MORE ROOM TO MANEUV--
WHEN PEOPLE ASK WHY I TOOK THIS JOB, I TELL THEM IT'S THE PLEASURE I GET IN TOUCHING MY AUDIENCE.
HENRI!
E-EDDIE, G-GGET OUT OF H-H-HERE.
NO ONE WALKS OUT ON MY ACT.
THAT CANE OF YOURS IS ALWAYS A SHOWSTOPPER, CHAIRMAN.
YOUR ADAMANTIUM BODY WILL BE OF LITTLE USE IN THE AIR.
MY ARM FEELS LIKE PUTTY WHERE THIS GOON'S ENERGY GLOVE GRAZED ME.
THIS HAS TURNED INTO A FARCE. STAYING HERE WON'T DO US ANY GOOD.

THE EVIDENCE WE FOUND WON'T MEAN A THING IF WE CAN'T GET OUT OF THE CASINO COMPLEX.
NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR PLAN "B."
--IF ONLY WE HAD A PLAN "B."
STUPID TWIST!
CALM YOURSELF, DEALER. THE SKIRT WON'T GET FAR.
LATER...
SLEPT OFF THAT HANGOVER, DES?
YOU MADE QUITE A SCENE AT THE WAKE. I COULD'VE CHARGED ADMISSION.
WHY WASN'T I INFORMED THE RATPACK CAPTURED TWO OF XI'AN'S ACCOMPLICES?
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE INTERESTED IN CASINO AFFAIRS.
WHEN DADDY WAS ALIVE I WASN'T--
--BUT NOW I'M DUE HALF THE ESTATE. YOU BET I'M INTERESTED.
YOU WOULDN'T BE TRYING TO SUPPRESS ANY SUGGESTION XI'AN DIDN'T KILL DADDY, WOULD YOU?
DON'T CROSS ME, DES.
SOON, I'LL BE SITTING ON THE SYNDICATE EXECUTIVE BOARD--

"--AND ANYONE IN MY WAY GETS BURIED ALONG WITH XI'AN AND HIS MUTANT CRONIES."
VURROOARRR--
CHUNGK
THAT'S JUNKPILE'S AT.V..YOU TWO SPLIT UP.
IF THINGS GO BAD, TAKE THE EXPERIENCE AND GET XI'AN AS FAR AWAY AS POSSIBLE.
BUT--
NO ARGUMENT. YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR POWER, AND TINA'S NO MATCH FOR--

JUNKPILE?
THUD


I WANT XI'AN, SHAKTI.
I'VE STOPPED YOU BEFORE.


YOU'RE NOT GETTING INSIDE MY HEAD AGAIN, WITCH.
PICKED UP A PSIONIC JAMMER ON THE BLACK MARKET. YOU'RE NO THREAT TO ME NOW.

I REMEMBER WHEN YOU SWORE YOU'D NEVER BOW DOWN BEFORE ANYONE.
NOW YOU'RE RUNNING ERRANDS FOR LYTTON AND DESDEMONA SYNGE--
--TWO FLAT-SCANS.

THWAK
NEVER LIKED YOU, SHAKTI.

TRAITOR!!!
YOU WERE ONE OF US!
GROW UP, GIRLY GIRL--
--I WAS NEVER ONE OF YOU.
SNICK
TINA!!
IF YOU'VE HURT HER--
ARGGHHH!
SKRITCH SKRITCH
LORD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?
NOT MUCH, MEAT.
SEE, MY BODY'S BEEN REBUILDING ITSELF WITH SCRAP FOR YEARS.
I LOSE A LIMB, I MAKE A NEW ONE OUTTA WHATEVER'S AVAILABLE.
HURTS LIKE BLAZES, BUT I SURVIVE.

LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN SAY THE SAME.
NOW I FIGURE YOU JUST SPENT WHATEVER ENERGY YOU WERE CHANNELING A MOMENT AGO.
URGH... CAN'T... BREATHE...
TOO BAD. DOESN'T GIVE YOU MUCH OF A CHANCE AGAINST AN IRON GRIP, DOES IT?
DIDN'T THINK SO.
NOW FOR WHAT I CAME FOR--
--XI'AN.
NOT LOOKING TOO GOOD, BROTHER.
YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN PEOPLE WITH MESSIANIC PRETENSIONS--
--WIND UP CRUCIFIED.
TO BE CONCLUDED

ARE YOU ... EXperienced?

Joey Cavalieri Editor Matthew Morra Assistant Editor

All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that information by request. Send correspondence to: Are You X-perienced?, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

Out Of My Head

What we have here are the makings of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Unquestionably, the single most requested new title since we began the 2099 line was X-MEN 2099. *We got mail addressed to this title even before it was announced.* In other words, we weren't sure we were gonna do this book, but *you convinced us.*

I could go on here about the guiding philosophy that John, Ron and I have for this book, but I'll deal with those issues as they come up in your letters, okay?

Dear 2099ers,

I'm very disappointed with you, young men, go to your writing rooms! You forgot everyone's favorite mutants, the X-Men, when you made 2099 comics.

At least make a Wolverine 2099. He could have claws coming out of his fingers instead of his arms. Beast 2099 could have three heads and be called the Great Beast. Gambit could use ninja stars instead of playing cards. Colossus can have only steel fists. Jubilee can make even bigger explosions, and Professor X can be younger and dress like a punk.

(Name and address withheld by request)

Yeah, well, we *could've* done that, but that would have been easy. We'd rather start from scratch with new characters. It's a lot more fun to build skyscrapers on our own than rely on the foundations of the past!

Dear Joey,

Please excuse the mistakes in the following letter: it's written in Canadian! Congrats, guys! You've broken exciting new ground with your fantastic 2099 universe. The 2099 crew have obviously gone to a great deal of work to create Spidey, Doom, Ravage and Punisher. I figure I owe you hard working folks at least one little letter. I've been reading many titles for many years, and SPIDER-MAN 2099 is the first title innovative enough to drive me to correspondence by mail. I must admit that SPIDEY 2099 didn't seem like great news when I read about it in *Comic Shop News*, but now I'm convinced that this is a very promising book with promising characters. The production and editing staff have gone that extra mile and then some.

Where are the almighty X-Men? This is my humble and suggestion for a sixth 2099 title. The closest thing to mutants I've seen so far in the 2099 universe are the mutroids from RAVAGE 2099. Have mutants been eliminated from the Earth of the future?

Some X-Men 2099 parameters: don't keep the characters too true to Charles Xavier's ideals. After all, time does distort even the truth. Perhaps the X-Men could realize what Cable and Magnus realized, that war may have to precede peace with homo sapiens and homo superior.

Whatever you do for the sixth 2099 title, keep Logan out of the future. I know it's possible for his healing factor to keep him alive for another hundred years or so, but he does indeed age. I really don't want to see any cheesy "resurrections" of Logan from the past. His character's integrity's too valuable.

Until Logan quits smoking and gets a nicotine patch, make mine Marvel.

Paxton Francis
541 Mt. Allison Pl.
Saskatoon, Sask.
Canada S7H 4A9

Worry not, Paxton. We're interested in developing the relationships of the gang we've got here. As far as carrying the torch lit by Prof. X, Xi'an certainly has come up with quite a variation, as you'll see.

Dear Joey,

I'm writing with my penny's worth on 2099. I'm afraid the only book I've stuck with so far is SPIDER-MAN 2099: it's just brilliant! I'm not a big Peter Parker fan, but the new title with Miguel O'Hara tops my reading list. The whole team, especially Peter David, is doing a great job.

A while back I wrote suggesting that you do an X-Men 2099 title and it appears I wasn't the only one. But, Joey, you have me worried that in the rush to get the title out for the X anniversary, you will do it injustice, because it has real potential.

Make sure you tie it in to current continuity! The X-Men have too many future related plot threads (Bishop only came from around 2080, according to UNCANNY X-MEN #287) for these to be ignored. Including someone like Bishop, and chronicling his adventures before he came back in time, could only help.

I do have one general comment on 2099: the emergence of all these heroes at exactly the same time, with no explanation linking them, pushes credibility. Any explanation, however cosmic, would be better than none.

Whether I've liked individual titles or not, I'm impressed by the coherent universe you've created. Best of luck with your future titles.

Michael Spedinger
84 Handen Rd.
Lee, London
England, SE12 8NR

We purposely tried to *miss* the X Anniversary, just so we wouldn't get lost in the shuffle, Mike. The New Heroic Age is sort of a chain reaction. Each hero's appearance sparks another's. As far as current continuity goes, sure Bishop comes from the future, but...*when?*

X-Men,

I recently heard that you plan on doing an X-Men 2099 comic. I'm not sure that the X-Men of that era will live up to the ideals that the current X-Men embody. Don't get me wrong, but from the way things appear to be run in 2099, the mutants of the future should not be persecuted as much as they are in the present day.

I ask you to look at mutants from the corporate perspective of 2099. From SPIDER-MAN 2099 #1, it seems that Alchemax encourages mutations, at least ones that would be beneficial to them. But since the mutation process is dangerous, you'd naturally want to use criminals or someone else that society doesn't care about to experiment on. But, the companies would also try to find people born with mutant powers. Mutants might not be as persecuted as they are in the present because it would all be just business.

Jesse Sanchez
(Address withheld by request)

In any case, Jesse, the issues are control and freedom. Sure, Alchemax might try to create mutants, but they'd want to own 'em. That's no good, right? Also, the more diverse a society, the more pronounced the differences, and those differences seem to create friction.

MORE OF MARVEL 2099

SPIDER-MAN 2099 #14 *Peter David and guest artist Tom Grindberg chronicle the team-up between Spidey and the Net Prophet in "Boiling Point!"*

RAVAGE 2099 #12 *Feral, fierce and fearsome, Ravage rips through the forces of ECO, Tiana goes in search of super powers, and the Fearmaster from THE PUNISHER 2099 guest-stars!*

DOOM 2099 #11 *"Faith and Revival," the second chapter in the Wakanda Trilogy, reunites Wire and Duke Stratosphere, deepens the mystery of Vox, and faces off Doom against Thandaza!*

THE PUNISHER 2099 #10 *Pat, Tony and Tom introduce...Jigsaw 2099!*

2099 UNLIMITED #2 *The Hulk 2099!*

NEXT ISSUE

Don't grow too used to our cast members. One of 'em won't be around after X-MEN 2099 #31